

The Leesburg Planning Commission met on Monday, March 28, 2005 in the Council Chambers, 25 West Market Street, Leesburg, Virginia. Staff members present were Susan Swift, Christopher Murphy, Brian Boucher, Bruce Douglas and Calvin Grow.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chairman Vaughan.

**ATTENDANCE**

Present: Chairman Vaughan  
Commissioner Bangert  
Commissioner Barnes  
Commissioner Wright  
Commissioner Jones  
Commissioner Kalriess  
Mayor Umstattd

Absent: Commissioner Hoovler

**CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT**

Chairman Vaughan reviewed the agenda and the outline for protocol on the review of this application. There was some discussion on which Town Plan the Meadowbrook application should be considered.

Commissioner Kalriess felt it should be considered under the current (1997) Town Plan since it was submitted under that plan. He expressed concern over density, the Route 15 corridor and the impact the application would have on neighboring properties.

Commissioner Jones concurred that lower density would be a public benefit. He also felt that the application, as submitted, was simply another typical development. There seems to be a resistance to doing innovative things here.

Chairman Vaughan said the Planning Commission will review this application under the 1997 Town Plan. This worksession was scheduled because of the size and complexity of this application. Tonight the Planning Commission should aim to discuss and take a direction for this application.

**STAFF PRESENTATION**

Bruce Douglas, Sr. Planner, gave a presentation to the Planning Commission regarding the Town Plan. While the Plan is a guide and not an ordinance, it allows for subjective interpretation, which is how it should be, it shouldn't spell out engineering detail. The staff report noted numerous issues where the Meadowbrook application does not comply

with the existing Plan. There was discussion on what the base density should be and what guidance the plan provides for each increase in units per acre. Mr. Douglas felt that the design needed to be consistent with the Town Plan and more attention should be paid to areas of the Town Plan that the application does not correctly address, such as natural resources protection.

There was some discussion on the density that the current plan sets out. The range is 2-4 units per acre, making an average 3. The chart does indicate that it can go as high as 5.

Commissioner Bangert said she understood if you went to 3, you could get bonus density.

Susan Swift said there is no formula. The plan provides guidance and addresses five areas. The plan cannot anticipate each parcel. Mr. Douglas specifically read the density numbers allowed when certain criteria are met as provided in the Subdivision and Land Development regulations.

There was some discussion about page 6-28, paragraph 18 of the Town Plan. This seems to provide discretion and flexibility, along with guidance.

Commissioner Jones said that the Carolina Trail has been completely ignored in this application. He feels that this is an important historic feature and should have been considered.

Chairman Vaughan restated that the application did not meet Town Plan criteria in several areas, and encouraged the Planning Commission to voice their concerns about the application.

Commissioner Jones would like to see a synergy between office space, employment centers, retail and residential. The comp plan asks for 40% office which has not been met in the application. This should create an invigorating climate in this part of town.

Commissioner Kalriess feels the 100 foot setback between Rt. 15 is necessary, does it get closer anywhere? It must be consistent on both sides of the street. Brian Boucher explained the setbacks according to the current ordinance. Mr. Kalriess went on to express concern about densities as they move across the site. He does not want to see three and four story buildings along Rt. 15. He also doesn't want to see condos back up to single family homes. He feels that higher density should be in the center of the site not near the edges. He feels a density of two is where the basis should start.

Mayor Umstattd mentioned that services such as a gas station becomes an area of concern. She also agrees with a density of two as a base. She would also like to see something done about the Carolina Trail, and asked if the restoration or memorialization of this was part of the plan. Mr. Douglas said that there were ideas that could be considered.

Commissioner Wright expressed concerns with the modifications presented. He asked whether a school site was considered open space, the answer, fifty percent of that space is open space. Mr. Wright doesn't like the alleys and the resulting private roadways. The expense of maintenance can be costly to HOA's. Further, site drainage and waterflow issues are areas of concern. The existing drainage flows are scheduled to be altered. Also, the phasing of the road improvements will not suit the development proposed the way it is currently scheduled.

Mayor Umstattd commented on the phasing issue. When Council approved the Oaklawn and Stratford developments, there were over \$6 million in road improvements requested prior to the building of the homes.

Commissioner Bangert referred to the letter received from the applicant. There seems to be a variance between what this says and what the staff report contained. An example was the size of the school site which seems to have gone from 11.5 acres to 12.2 acres. She wants to make sure the numbers remain consistent. Another concern was the redirection of the stormwater and drainage. Keeping this in a state where it doesn't stagnate can be a costly venture. The school funds do not have the dollars to build schools everywhere someone proffers land. Perhaps there could be a better use for this site. There should be no multifamily dwellings on Stowers Lane. She does not want to see any variance of setbacks or 58 foot heights to buildings.

Commissioner Barnes suggested that the mixed use section start at the same time the residential use does, this is one way future residents would see what is going to be in their area.

Commissioner Kalriess asked what it would take to make the wetlands a pleasant amenity, it is currently in a very rough state. Mr. Douglas concurred that yes, there would need to be some significant improvements, especially with regard to waterflow.

Sally Gillette, a representative for the applicant came forward and introduced Mark Headley of Wetlands Solutions. He said his firm had done the wetlands study in the area. He said there definitely would need to be some mitigation once all of the justifications had gone through the proper channels. Currently wildlife such as beavers, are quite active and cause much of the pooling/flooding in the area. Mr. Kalriess asked if they were going to buy out of the wetlands bank or do mitigation once the studies have been completed. Mr. Headley explained that once this has been studied and approved, there needs to be replacement or improvement. Credits are given for improvements that maintain the original wetland concept.

Sally Gillette then requested two and half weeks to go back to the drawing board and resubmit the application. She would like to meet again with these revisions. They are requesting another worksession. There was some discussion on the scheduling of this, if staff reviews it, it needs four weeks to review, and the applicant would have to extend the deadline.

Commissioner Jones was concerned with the number of meetings that are happening and the reiterations that are occurring.

Commissioner Wright said they have heard the concerns many times. He suggested they come back with a final submittal.

Commissioner Kalriess suggested the Commission state what they want to see happen, thus establishing some parameters for resubmissions.

Chairman Vaughan said they expect to see the application conform to the Town Plan. He thinks that a second public hearing is feasible. Ms. Gillette said there were some gray areas in the plan, and this is why rehearing this might be important. Mr. Kalriess asked the applicant if they were clear on what the Commission is seeking. Ms. Gillette said there was some gray area on the residential area location on Evergreen Mill Road, and would changes require a town plan amendment.

Commissioner Wright said moving a commercial area on Evergreen Mill and the density issues were two gray areas for him.

Mayor Umstattd said that more than likely legal opinion would be required prior to setting a second public hearing.

Commissioner Jones wants to stay with a base of two, a well planned residential area and the office/commercial area that will provide a “neighborhood”.

Commissioner Bangert agreed that density is a huge factor. This will impact schools, roads, ballfields, grocery lines, etc. At a base 2 there would be 648 homes vs. 1296 at a base 4.

Commissioner Kalriess said the density should be between 2 and 4. He said there should be neighborhood-serving retail in the area. This is a net positive benefit. Let’s focus on the neighborhood and not the density. Ms. Gillette asked what type of high quality retail Mr. Kalriess was referring to, is it something like a Barnes and Noble? That is good in the northern portion for the development, but not the neighborhood type commercial.

Chairman Vaughan commented that perhaps some larger stores in the area would be good to keep the residents that live in that area from having to go across town to do their shopping.

Ms. Gillette asked if there was interest in seeing residential in the mixed use center at all. The answer was yes, vertical residential, but not too high. There needs to be better buffering and perhaps some layering in the density near the single family homes.

Ms. Gillette asked what the procedure was now. Should they meet one on one, or have more sessions. Chairman Vaughan said that meetings between the KSLB and the

**SPECIAL MEETING**

applicant was suggested early on. Perhaps they should now get together with the local community and take it to the next level.

Ms. Gillette asked if after the meetings are held, then would they resubmit again? Susan Swift asked what the schedule was if this occurs. What sequence is there? As previously stated. Staff needs to know the realistic timeframe.

Ms. Gillette said they needs two and a half weeks to get the redesign done. Then they would have community meetings – this could take an additional two weeks. A resubmission could occur in about five weeks. Staff needs four weeks after this submission for review. Susan Swift said the traffic study might have to be amended. There was some further discussion on getting together to establish a realistic timeframe for a resubmission.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The motion was made to adjourn at 9:20pm.

**Prepared by:**

**Approved by:**

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**Linda DeFranco, Commission Clerk**

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**Clifton Vaughan, Chairman**